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AN ANALYSIS OF A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WASHINGTON'S NEW 4-H LEADERS.

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A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF 124 (10 PERCENT) NEW 4-H LEADERS IN WASHINGTON COMPLETED A PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE ON MATERIAL IN A SERIES OF SIX PAMPHLETS TO BE USED IN TRAINING SESSIONS. AN IDENTICAL POST-TEST ADMINISTERED BY MAIL 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TRAINING PROGRAM DREW A 60 PERCENT RETURN. THE STUDY DETERMINED (1) SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW 4-H LEADERS ATTENDING TRAINING SESSIONS, (2) THEIR UNDERSTANDING PRIOR TO TRAINING OF AREAS COVERED BY THE GUIDE, (3) UNDERSTANDING AFTER TRAINING, AND (4) EFFECTS OF SEX, AGE, PREVIOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE, 4-H EXPERIENCE, OCCUPATION, RESIDENCE, AND EDUCATION ON THE LEADER'S KNOWLEDGE. NEW 4-H LEADERS SCORING HIGH ON BOTH PRETEST AND POST-TEST HAD HAD PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER YOUTH LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE, HAD CHILDREN IN 4-H FOR 2 OR MORE YEARS, AND WERE IN PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS. ONLY THOSE WITH SOME COLLEGE INDICATED ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE 3 MONTHS AFTER TRAINING. THE 4-H LEADERS WITH MOST EXPERIENCE SCORED HIGHEST ON THE PRETEST BUT LOWEST ON THE POST-TEST. ALL GROUPS SHOWED A NEED FOR TRAINING. THIS REPORT WAS BASED ON THE AUTHOR'S SUMMARY OF SPECIAL PROBLEMS REPORT, SUBMITTED FOR MASTER OF EXTENSION DEGREE. (AJ)

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A GRADUATE STUDY SUMMARY

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE • WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY • PULLMAN

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AN ANALYSIS OF A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WASHINGTON'S NEW 4-H LEADERS

By

James E. Havens*

BACKGROUND SITUATION

Evidence of efforts toward giving new 4-H leaders some training may presently be found in all counties in Washington. However, similarities in effort and content of these new 4-H leader training efforts are often difficult to find. New 4-H leader training efforts range from an office call by the prospective or new 4-H leader, where there is conversation with the extension office secretary and/or 4-H agent to an intensive training program. In the latter, the new 4-H leader may attend and participate in several well prepared and presented training meetings designed especially for the new 4-H leader.

A new approach to 4-H leader training was initiated in Washington in the fall of 1965 and used in approximately 25 of the 39 counties during the 1966 4-H year. This training program was developed by the author of this study for use throughout the state. Its title is "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," and consists of six separate pamphlets containing information and material for five 2½ to 3 hour training sessions. The titles of the pamphlets are:

Number	Title	
(2761)	Introduction	
(2749)	Lesson 1	4-H History, Objectives and Leadership Roles
(2745)	Lesson 2	Meeting Basic Needs of Boys and Girls
(2763)	Lesson 3	Teaching Methods
(2768)	Lesson 4	County 4-H Program
(2743)	Lesson 5	Planning the Yearly 4-H Program

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*Summary of Special Problems Report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EXTENSION at Washington State University, August, 1966.

The needs of new 4-H leaders and the value of training new 4-H leaders along these needs has been well documented by both research and experience of 4-H agents. The recognition of the importance for 4-H agents to program for new 4-H leaders as a single, important audience with specific needs that can best be met through an intensive, new 4-H leader training program seems to be gaining acceptance by the majority of the 4-H agents in Washington.

New 4-H leaders need to have an understanding of their job as 4-H leaders. They must also have an understanding of the total scope of 4-H and how it is organized. Very little, and in most cases, no systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the various new 4-H leader training programs being used in the counties has been conducted. Since approximately 25 of the 39 counties of Washington used the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," for their basic new 4-H leader training programs during the 1966 4-H year, and since more counties have indicated an intention to use the series in the 1967 4-H year, it became imperative to determine the effectiveness of this program for training new 4-H leaders.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To determine some of the characteristics of the new 4-H leaders who attended the new 4-H leader training session.

2. To determine the understanding new 4-H leaders have in areas covered by the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," prior to the time they receive this training.

3. To determine the amount of change in understanding of the information covered by the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," that takes place in the leaders who attend the training sessions.

4. To determine the areas covered by the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," which are most effective and least effective in bringing about change in new 4-H leaders' knowledge as a result of attending the training meetings.

5. To determine the effects the independent variables of sex, age, previous volunteer youth leadership experience, having belonged to 4-H as a youth, having children in 4-H, number of years children have been in 4-H, occupation, place of residence, and education has on the new 4-H leader's knowledge of information covered in the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," at the time the pre-test and the post-test was administered.

METHOD

One-hundred twenty-four new 4-H leaders in Grant, Lewis, Pierce and Stevens counties were included in this study. The leaders represented approximately 10 per cent of the new 4-H leaders in Washington in the fall of 1965. These leaders did not constitute a random sample of the new 4-H leaders in Washington, however they are thought by the author to be representives of the wide range of characteristics found in the new 4-H leaders in Washington.

A pre-training questionnaire, hereafter called the pre-test questionnaire, was completed by all new 4-H leaders included in this study prior to the start of their first new 4-H leader training session. The pre-test questionnaire contained 74 items relating to the material to be covered in the training series. The respondents were to indicate whether they "agreed" were "uncertain" or "disagreed" with the statement contained in each of the 74 items. The post-test, which was administered through a mail questionnaire three months after the completion of the training program, contained the same 74 items as the pre-test. The instructions were the same on the post-test as on the pre-test. A 60 per cent return was received on the post-test.

The following scale was used in evaluating the acceptability of the training, and thus the learning as determined by the per cent of correct responses given by the new 4-H leaders.

Percent Correct Responses	Interpreted as Indicating
70 or above	training and learning adequate
69 or below	training and learning inadequate

Four-H agents McKenzie, Grant County; Johnson, Lewis County; Stowe, Pierce County and Maxwell, Stevens County conducted the new 4-H leader training sessions. Some assistance was received from other Extension agents in some of the counties. A notable exception to this was in Pierce County where 4-H service leaders conducted the training sessions and administered the pre-test to the new 4-H leaders in two of the four districts where training was held. The 4-H agents and the 4-H service leaders received similar training in preparation for the training meetings. Since identical material was used, and similar training given to the competent, high motivated individuals who conducted the training sessions, similar training can reasonably be expected to have been given in each county.

FINDINGS

The study revealed that there are some differences in the characteristics of the new 4-H leaders in Washington, and five of these characteristics effected the degree of learning achieved by the 4-H leaders who attended the new 4-H leader training meetings.

Characteristics of New 4-H Leaders

Characteristics of new 4-H leaders in the study were found to be:

1. Women outnumbered men as new 4-H leaders by 4 to 1.

2. Fifty-one per cent of the new 4-H leaders were between 30 and 39 years of age, 27 per cent were between 40 and 49, 17 per cent were from 19 to 29 years old, and 6 per cent were over 50 years old.

3. Fifty per cent of the new 4-H leaders had been volunteer leaders in other youth organizations prior to becoming a 4-H leader.

4. Sixty-seven per cent of the new 4-H leaders were 4-H alumni, 21 per cent had belonged to other youth groups as a youth, and 12 per cent indicated they had belonged to no youth groups as a youth. Pierce County was notably different, as 82 per cent of the new 4-H leaders were 4-H alumni.

5. Approximately four-fifths of the new 4-H leaders have or have had children in 4-H. The percentages of leaders, according to the length of time they have had children in 4-H are: 1 year or less, 24 per cent; 2 to 4 years, 36 per cent; 5 years or more, 20 per cent; no children in 4-H, 19 per cent. In Pierce County, 60 per cent of the new 4-H leaders had children in 4-H for 1 year or less.

6. Sixty-five per cent of the new 4-H leaders were housewives, 15 per cent were farm owners, 9 per cent were employed in the professions, 4 per cent were clerical workers, 3 per cent were service workers, and 2 per cent owned a business other than a farm or a profession.

7. Seventy-three per cent of the new 4-H leaders live in rural areas, 10 per cent live in the suburbs, 8 per cent live in villages with population less than 2,500, 8 per cent live in towns with a population between 2,500 and 25,000, and 1 per cent (1 leader) lived in an urban area of over 25,000 population.

8. Six per cent of the new 4-H leaders had completed between 7 to 9 grades of school, 56 per cent had completed 10 to 12 grades, 20 per cent had some college, and 18 per cent indicated they had completed college.

Some Leadership Activities of New 4-H Leaders

Sixty-two of the original 124 new 4-H leaders returned both a pre-test and a post-test. An additional 21 leaders were not considered active leaders at the time the post-test was completed, giving a 60 per cent return from the active 4-H leaders on the post-test. The following data are for the 62 4-H leaders who returned both a pre-test and post-test:

9. The length of time new 4-H leaders had been leaders prior to attending the new 4-H leader training varies considerably. The length of leadership prior to training of leaders in the study are: 0 to 2 months, 55 per cent; 3 to 6 months, 11 per cent; 7 to 12 months, 16 per cent; 13 to 18 months, 8 per cent; 19 to 24 months, 13 per cent. This shows that 79 per cent of the new 4-H leaders had been in 4-H leadership for less than one year and 21 per cent had been leaders for 1 to 2 years, prior to attending the new 4-H leader training meetings.

10. Approximately half the leaders were in clubs where club goals had been established and a yearly club program developed. Only one-fourth of the leaders were in clubs where a schedule of the yearly club program had been printed and distributed to leaders, members, and parents.

11. The 103 new 4-H leaders who were active leaders five months after the training program started had attended an average of 3.6 of the five meetings possible. The 21 leaders who became inactive had attended only 2.3 leader training meetings.

Influence of Various Independent Variables on the Knowledge of New 4-H Leaders

The 62 new 4-H leaders who did and the 62 who did not return a pre-test had the same knowledge of 4-H prior to attending the new 4-H leader training meetings as measured by the pre-test. This suggests that from a knowledge standpoint, the 62 leaders who returned a post-test and on whom the following data are gathered are representative, from the standpoint of knowledge about 4-H, of the 124 leaders included in the first part of this study.

A score of 70 per cent correct responses was established as the minimum level to indicate adequate knowledge by the 4-H leader. Any score below the 70 per cent level on either the pre-test or post-test indicated inadequate knowledge by the 4-H leader, and on the post-test an inadequate training program.

12. The independent variables of sex, being a 4-H or other youth group alumni, having had or now have children in 4-H, and place of residence had almost no effect on the new 4-H leader's knowledge of 4-H either before or after attending the new 4-H leader program. When compared for the above variables, the new 4-H leaders varied little from the score of 56 per cent correct responses on the pre-test and the average of 70 per cent correct responses on the post-test achieved by all the leaders in this study.

13. New 4-H leaders with previous volunteer leadership in other youth groups scored higher on both the pre-test with 60 per cent and post-test at 73 per cent correct responses than the leaders with no previous volunteer leadership experiences whose pre-test and post-test scores were 52 and 67 per cent correct responses respectively.

14. New 4-H leaders who had children in 4-H for two or more years had more knowledge of 4-H before and after training than leaders with no children in 4-H or children in 4-H for one year or less. Leaders in the 4-H program two to four years were high with scores of 61 and 73 per cent correct on the pre-test and post-test respectively. Leaders with children in 4-H less than one year were low with 49 and 66 per cent correct responses on the pre-test and post-test respectively.

15. New 4-H leaders whose occupation was one of the professions scored highest on both pre-test and post-test with 63 and 80 per cent correct responses respectively. No consistent pattern existed among the leaders with other occupations. Only the farm owner group of leaders with a post-test score of 66 per cent correct answers indicated inadequate learning three months after training.

16. Educational level had little effect on the beginning knowledge of the new 4-H leader, but had considerable effect three months after training. College graduates scored highest on the post-test at 77 per cent, followed by leaders with some college at 72 per cent, leaders completing 10 to 12 grades at 68 per cent, and leaders completing 7 to 9 grades with 65 per cent correct responses. Only the leaders who had completed some college or graduated from college indicated adequate knowledge three months after training.

17. Length of time the new 4-H leader had been a leader definately influenced the effect the leader training program had upon their basic knowledge of 4-H. Although leaders with 19 to 24 months of 4-H leadership experience ranked considerably above other leaders on the pre-test with 62 per cent correct responses, they ranked lowest on the post-test with 66 per cent correct responses. Leaders with 13 to 18 months experience ranked next lowest on the post-test with leaders in 4-H for one year or less being the only leaders who scored above the 70 per cent correct level on the post-test.

Number and Per Cent of Correct Responses on the Pre-Test and Post-Test

All county groups of new 4-H leaders indicated a real need for training as the highest score achieved by a county group on the pre-test was 59 per cent correct responses. The average correct responses for the entire sample on the pre-test was 56 per cent, 14 per cent below the 70 per cent level established to indicate adequate knowledge.

18. The pre-test revealed that information on "County 4-H Programs" (Lesson 4), and "Planning the Yearly 4-H Club Program" (Lesson 5), with pre-test scores of 47 and 49 per cent correct respectively were the areas least understood by the new 4-H leaders. "4-H History, Objectives and Leadership Roles" (Lesson 1), at 57 per cent correct, was a little more familiar to the new 4-H leader. Information on "Meeting Basic Needs of

Boys and Girls" (Lesson 2), at 64 per cent correct responses and "Teaching Methods" (Lesson 3), at 64 per cent correct were the best understood by the new 4-H leaders prior to attending the new 4-H leader training program.

19. On the post-test all county groups of new 4-H leaders except Grant County scored at least 70 per cent correct responses. The information on Lesson 5 was least understood of all lessons by the new 4-H leaders after the training program was completed. An average of only 59 per cent correct responses on the post-test was attained by the respondents on the information covered in Lesson 5. The average post-test scores of respondents on Lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4 were above the 70 per cent level.

20. In Pierce County the new 4-H leader training was conducted by both the 4-H agent and 4-H service leaders. The total per cent of correct responses for respondents from Pierce County reached the 70 per cent correct level and was very little below the 71 and 73 per cent for Lewis and Stevens Counties respectively, where the training was conducted by 4-H agents.

Areas of the New 4-H Leaders' Training Program Needing Additional Emphasis in Future Training Programs

Similar training, using the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," to that given by the 4-H agents and 4-H service leaders included in this study should bring similar results in other new 4-H leader training programs. Areas of information where this study indicated adequate learning by the new 4-H leader had taken place should be adequately learned by other new 4-H leaders if similar training is given. Likewise, areas in the training program where inadequate learning by the new 4-H leaders occurred, should be expected to be inadequately learned by new 4-H leaders in other training programs, unless additional emphasis in these areas is made.

Specific areas where this study has revealed additional emphasis is needed are:

21. Lesson 1--Areas dealing with the founding reasons for 4-H, the official beginning of 4-H, the scope of the 4-H program in Washington, the objectives of the 4-H program and the duties of the community club leader, project group leader, and activity leader.

22. Lesson 2--Areas dealing with the age categories used in 4-H in Washington for educational programming, characteristic of different age groups of 4-Hers, individual differences of 4-Hers, and 4-H programming implications because of these individual characteristics.

23. Lesson 3--Areas relating to the use of the quality of the 4-H member's project to determine the 4-H member's level of achievement, the place of the annual achievement program in giving recognition needed by the

4-H members, and whether state 4-H policy requires 4-H members to enter at least one judging contest a year in order to receive an achievement pin.

24. Lesson 4--Areas dealing with the recognition of county Extension agents as WSU faculty members, the responsibility of the county Extension Service in determining county 4-H policy, leader attendance at county 4-H leader council meetings, and the time 4-H scholarship application are due in the state 4-H office.

25. Lesson 5--Areas relating to who should plan the 4-H club program, definitions and examples of 4-H activities and events and the need to follow the club program as planned.

Final Evaluation of the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series"

The data gathered and analyzed in this study reveals that new 4-H leaders in Washington need and can profit from participation in a detailed, well organized, timely, interesting, meaningful, challenging, effective new 4-H leader training program. With some modifications the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," can meet this criteria for a new 4-H leader training program.

IMPLICATIONS

Based upon the information revealed in this study, the author feels the following implications to a new 4-H leader training program in Washington are evident:

1. A new 4-H leader training program based upon the materials presented in Lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series," constitutes a needed and effective training program for Washington's new 4-H leaders.

2. The information in Lesson 5 is also needed by the new 4-H leader, but the approach to the presentation of this information needs to be carefully studied and a more effective method of presentation detemined.

3. New 4-H leaders must be trained early in their first year of 4-H leadership if the new 4-H leader training program is to be very effective in shaping the leaders' attitude toward and philosophy of 4-H in a way that is consistent with the aim of 4-H.

4. The adequate level of learning achieved by the Pierce County new 4-H leaders implies that 4-H service leaders should continue to be involved in training new 4-H leaders. In many counties, use of 4-H service leaders may be the only present method available to give new 4-H

leaders the training they need, when they need it most, which is early in their first year of leadership.

5. New 4-H leaders who have been in 4-H for more than one year should constitute a separate audience from leaders who have been in 4-H leadership for less than one year. When possible these audiences should not be combined in the same new 4-H leader training sessions.

6. The new 4-H leader training program may be more beneficial to leaders who have a high school education or less if this audience could be trained separately from new 4-H leaders with a higher level of education. More time could be spent presenting and discussing the information in each lesson, if these audiences could be trained separately.

7. Four-H agents in Washington who are not presently employing an organized approach to new 4-H leader training which is comparable to that suggested in the "Agent Guide - New 4-H Leader Training Series" could help their new 4-H leaders better understand the 4-H program and their roles as 4-H leaders by initiating the above mentioned new 4-H leader training program.

8. In highly suburban and urban counties, the parents of first year 4-H members may be the best candidates for 4-H leadership.

9. The majority of the new 4-H leaders are coming from rural areas even though half the 4-H members reside elsewhere. If the 4-H program is to continue to grow, more leaders in the villages, suburbs, and cities must be recruited and trained.

10. The more training sessions a new 4-H leader attends, the more likely he is to remain active as a 4-H leader. Therefore, extra effort should be made to get new 4-H leaders to attend the new 4-H leader training meetings.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Three areas for further study are indicated by the nature of the data in this study. These data are:

1. The leaders included in this study should be re-studied in two to three years to determine if their approach to their 4-H leadership responsibility is different from leaders who have not received similar training.

2. Several characteristics of the new group of new 4-H leaders in Pierce County varied with the other new 4-H leaders in this study. These characteristics are the high per cent of new 4-H leaders who are 4-H alumni, the high per cent of new 4-H leaders who had children in 4-H for one year or less, the higher per cent of housewives as new 4-H

leaders, and the high per cent of new 4-H leaders who are women. These characteristics of the Pierce County new 4-H leaders should be studied in other suburban, urban areas to determine if new 4-H leaders in a highly suburban, urban area are any different from 4-H leaders in other areas.

3. The amount of knowledge of 4-H a new 4-H leader needs in order to properly carry on an active 4-H program should be more precisely determined. Training programs should then be designed which would more realistically allow each new 4-H leader an opportunity to acquire the knowledge necessary to become a functional leader in the 4-H program.

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